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Draft 4/23/65

STATEMENT FOR SEC/DEF

Infiltration of personnel from North Vietnam into South Vietnam continues to play a key role in supplying the leadership and technical skills and in replenishing the combat losses of the Viet Cong. Recent evidence, from newly captured prisoners and documents, has increased the total of confirmed infiltrators to a minimum of 21,000 and more probably 39,000 since 1959. Reports so far confirm the infiltration of 5,000 to 8,000 personnel in 1964, and in view of the normal time lag between actual infiltration and confirmation our earlier estimate of at least 10,000 infiltrators in 1964 still stands.

Furthermore, recent captures continue to support the estimate that up to 75% of those infiltrated in 1964 were ethnic Northerners, indicating that the Hanoi regime fully intends to maintain the high rate of infiltration despite the drying up of the supply of former Southerners who were ordered North by the Viet Minh in 1954. ~~As the State Department White Paper of March indicated,~~ Many of these Northerners were young draftees called into infiltration units that marched south through Laos in units 500-600 strong.

With the changing nature and the increasing scale of infiltration both of arms ~~which I shall discuss shortly~~, and of personnel, the course of aggression pursued by the government of North Vietnam has grown progressively more flagrant and unconstrained. The latest step, and one of the gravest significance, is the covert infiltration of a regular combat unit of the North Vietnamese Army into South Vietnam. Evidence accumulating in the last month ^{has} now confirmed the presence in northwest Kontum Province ^{Since February} of the 2d Battalion of the 101st Regiment, 325th Division of the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN). It is probable that the other battalions of the 101st Regiment are also in South Vietnam, and possible that still other elements of the 325th Division have infiltrated. These well-trained, highly-equipped

regular troops are not included in the infiltration totals I have cited and would, of course, increase them ~~greatly~~.

SEE
CHART

Meanwhile, the great bulk of the weapons requirements of the Viet Cong, and nearly all of their heavier, modern, crew-served weapons are supplied from external sources. Net weapons captured from government forces -- some 14,000 weapons since 1961 -- have gained the Viet Cong only 10-15% of their over-all weapons requirements, or only 30% of their requirements for their regular, "main force" units alone. The remainder of their weapons, for their 38-46,000 main force troops and their 100,000 irregulars, must come from outside.

Moreover, in the flow of infiltrated arms, old US and French weapons captured by the Viet Minh prior to 1954 have given way to modern Communist Bloc weapons, which require resupply of ammunition from outside. ~~Three arms caches uncovered this year yielded 4,000 Communist Bloc weapons.~~ It appears that the Viet Cong main force units are being entirely reequipped and re-trained with the newest Chinese Communist family of weapons. The 101 weapons captured from elements of a VC regiment in Chuong Thien Province on 5 and 6 April are believed to be a representative sample of the weapons mix of VC main force units; they consisted of 1 US M1 rifle and 4 US carbines, an East German light machine gun, 2 Czech assault rifles and the rest Chinese Communist weapons, including 72 rifles and carbines, 11 assault rifles, 4 light machine guns, 2 60mm mortars, 3 rocket launchers and a 75mm recoilless rifle. Thus over 90% of the small arms and 100% of the larger pieces were of Bloc -- mainly Chinese -- origin. Prisoners captured in this battle stated that their units had been quiet in the past 2 months because they had withdrawn.

to the U Minh Forest to receive and to train with the new family of Chicom weapons.

The one confirmed battalion of PAVN regular troops and any others that may be present are, of course, fully equipped with modern Communist Bloc weapons.

Our evidence indicates that the elements of the 325th PAVN Division present in South Vietnam, including the one confirmed battalion in Kontum Province, came south through Laos at the end of 1964 and the beginning of 1965, prior to our current air operations against military targets in North Vietnam. Our current operations have been carefully designed to impede any such large-scale movements, as well as to constitute a warning to the leaders of North Vietnam of the extreme dangers of increasing still further a process of infiltration that is already intolerable. The targets to date have been primarily associated with infiltration, including supply dumps, ammunition depots, lines of communication, radars in the vicinity of these facilities and more recently railroads, highways and bridges.

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~~BRIDGE STRIKES IN NORTH VIETNAM~~

~~SUMMARY STATEMENT~~

[Add latest strikes to the following]

During the period 3 April - 21 April, U. S. aircraft have struck a total of 17 rail and highway bridges along key lines of communication in North Vietnam. Primary emphasis has been placed on those routes south of 20° North which have been associated with the movement of men and material southward into Laos, and from there, ultimately into South Vietnam. Sixteen of the bridges have been destroyed or so badly damaged as to be rendered incapable of supporting traffic. An alternate target, an abandoned bridge, sustained minor damage.

The basic objectives of these strikes have been to inhibit, reduce and deflect the movement southward of men and material by effectively denying use of primary lines of communication and by forcing dependence on an inadequate secondary road system and alternate means of transport. Secondly, such strikes have been designed to increase dependence on an already overburdened truck transport capability by denying use of rail lines in the south.

A total of five highway bridges have been struck and destroyed along the key coastal highway (Route 1) leading north/south. Two railway and two combination railway and highway bridges situated between Thanh Hoa and Vinh also have been destroyed. These latter strikes have effectively terminated the movement of rail traffic from Thanh Hoa southward to the various convoy support and staging areas near Routes 8 and 12. Destruction of the railway bridges will result

in increased dependence on the highway systems and will extend the commitment imposed on an already overburdened truck transport capability.

Eight bridges have been struck along the routes leading westward into Laos. Heaviest emphasis has been placed on bridges situated along Routes 8 and 12 which are directly associated with the movement of men and material into the panhandle area of Laos and, ultimately, southward into South Vietnam.

U. S. strikes against bridges in North Vietnam have been extremely accurate and very effective. Spans and piers have been dropped and destroyed, and bridge approaches and abutments have been severely damaged. Supplementing the bridge strikes, armed reconnaissance is being conducted against moving convoys and strikes against secondary target areas associated with the lines of communication are being accomplished.

⑧ - ~~What makes you think the DRV~~
~~controls the VC.~~ What could the DRV
do that we want them to do to stop the war
in the South. ~~What can~~ What things can
~~the DRV control?~~

Al's white
paper }

Answer: Communications { direction & guidance

Stop training

Stop sending materiel

Political Setup

⑧ - Aren't the infiltrated personnel but an
insignificant portion of the VC.

Answer: They are not insig. in Nos.
They are key people.

Bear in mind that there are
always dissident people;
they ~~are~~ have been
significantly ^{provided key leadership}
augmented & ~~managed~~
to give them destructive
strength out of all proportion.

- ~~dirty~~ / x ^{say} This infiltration down!
- x Why estimates of infiltration going up?
- x what makes you think the DRV controls or can control the VC?
- What evidence do you have that you are actually reducing infiltration.

We are making it more difficult.
There is lag.

- ⊗ — Critics of White Paper (IF Stone's article) say the infiltration of weapons has not contributed significantly to VC. Doesn't the VC get most of its weapons from the US?

Answer should show weapons are Bloc-supplied.